



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes ANTI-GRAFFITI POLICY COMMITTEE

ALD. TONY ZIELINSKI, CHAIR

Ald. Robert Donovan, Vice-Chair

Ald. Terry Witkowski, Michael Miller, and Angelique Pettigrew

Staff Assistant, Linda Elmer, 286-2232

Fax: (414) 286-3456 E-mail: lelmer@milwaukee.gov

Monday, March 23, 2009

10:30 AM

Room 301-B, City Hall

Meeting convened: 10:35 A.M.

Present 5 - Donovan, Witkowski, Zielinski, Miller and Pettigrew

Also present: Assistant City Attorney Jarely Ruiz

1. Review and approval of the minutes of the January 12, 2009 meeting

Ald. Donovan moved approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

2. Department of Neighborhood Services update

Ms. Sharon Blando and Commissioner Art Dahlberg appeared on behalf of the department.

Ms. Blando previously provided the following documents to all committee members:

- 1. Report on the number of graffiti incidents reported (Exhibit 1).*
- 2. Graph that shows graffiti incidents reported to the DNS Anti-Graffiti hotline by aldermanic district (Exhibit 2).*
- 3. Graph on the Anti-Graffiti Program Appropriations for the Department of Neighborhood Services and Milwaukee Christian Center budget from 2004 through 2009 (Exhibit 3).*

Ms. Blando reported that the first two months of this year DNS received 100% increase in complaints compared to the same two months in previous years. Tagging graffiti increased 92% and gang graffiti increased 8%. To abate the increase, DNS has increased its cleanups and due to the increase in cleanups, some of the contractors have been working overtime. She feels that the two reasons for the increase in complaints is due to the decrease in funding and staffing in the Dept. of Neighborhood Services over the years.

Ms. Blando said that another problem DNS has had recently come across is that Waste Management hasn't been removing graffiti from the dumpsters as quickly as they used to do. She said DNS will give them a call to find out why.

The City has received restitution payments in the amount of \$1,400.00 in 2008.

DNS staff is currently writing a proposal for a grant for graffiti removal that Senator Kohl has put forth.

DNS graffiti removal budget for 2009 is \$95,000 and that is a decrease from the \$145,000 budgeted in previous years. She said in the past the Milwaukee Christian Center had received funding for graffiti removal materials and volunteers could go to them for the materials, but now, due to funding cuts, the Department of Neighborhood Services is now picking up the cost for all the supplies for both the operation pay back program and to all the graffiti removal volunteers.

Ald. Donovan requested that this committee, in conjunction with DNS, contact all local retail stores and request them to partner with the City by offering donations, discounts and grants for graffiti removal materials.

Commissioner Dahlberg said that he has met with City staff and they are evaluating the graffiti removal resources and are working on getting more staff out in the field over the next few months.

Ms. Blando reported that there are four graffiti art murals in the City and all are located in Ald. Witkowiak's District. She feels that those may be the cause for some of the graffiti in that area.

A motion was made by Ald. Witkowski that a letter by this committee be sent to the DOA-Budget & Management Division, in support of DNS' request to have the \$14,000 remaining funds in the graffiti abatement special purpose account be carried over from 2008 to 2009.

3. Department of Public Works update

Paul Novotny appeared on behalf of the department. He reported that the department has crews out doing graffiti removal services throughout the winter months and that the department also provides support to the Dept. of Neighborhood Services and the Police Department.

Mr. Novotny said the Dept. of Public Works puts the surveillance cameras up and that the cameras do not work well in the winter. He said all but two of the cameras were out for servicing, but all are back in place now.

4. Municipal Court update

Ms. Kristine Hinrichs appeared on behalf of the department.

Ms. Hinrichs previously provided a summary of vandalism and graffiti violations for the period of January 2007 through February 2009 to all members (Exhibit 4).

Ms. Hinrichs reported that most of the graffiti related citations are written to circuit court. The citations the municipal court deals with are for possession of graffiti materials and graffiti vandalism. She said in 2008 the municipal court had a total of 28 graffiti cases and in the first two months of 2009 they already have 11 cases. She said this year there have been twice as many cases for possession of graffiti materials compared to five cases during the same period in 2008.

Ms. Blando appeared and handed out a brochure titled, "Keeping You Informed - Case Discharge & Restitution" (Exhibit 5).

Ald. Zielinski asked Ms. Blando to notify him of all future graffiti case, where a violator is given probation and is required to pay restitution.

Ald. Zielinski said he will work with the judges to explore ways in which a graffiti violator's probation could be revoked if the violator is not paying his or her restitution.

5. Milwaukee Police Department update

Captain Eduardo Negron and Captain Donald Gaglione appeared on behalf of the department.

Captain Neoron said that January showed an increase in graffiti tagging. He said that Police District Two has stepped up its patrols in the southside areas that have shown an increase in graffiti. He said there have been some minor arrests on the near southside, but can't connect them to the graffiti. He said district two has also implemented the "Operation Payback Program."

Captain Gaglione said that "Operation Payback Program" was established in April of 2008 with the help of Ald. Donovan, the Community Partners Safe and Sound and a group of officers and probation officers. He said the program has been very successful and it will be implemented by other police districts that have graffiti problems.

Ald. Donovan requested that an action plan on the enforcement of the graffiti ordinances be prepared by the Police Dept. and sent to him.

Ald. Zielinski said he would like that the action plan presented at the next Anti-Graffiti meeting.

6. Milwaukee Christian Center update

Mr. Roger Aponty appeared on behalf of Michael Van Alstine, Milwaukee Christian Center, Neighborhood Improvement Project Director.

Mr. Aponty said Milwaukee Christian Center has two crews working throughout the city doing graffiti removal and are keeping up the best that they can.

Roll call taken at 11:45 A.M.

Present 4 - Witkowski, Zielinski, Miller and Pettigrew

Excused 1 - Donovan

7. Update from various business improvement districts related to their graffiti levels and graffiti removal efforts

Mr. Maurice Williams, Business Improvement District Board #37, 30th Street Industrial Corridor, appeared. He said he noticed that graffiti is starting to crawl out of the corridor and is spreading throughout the city and into other municipalities. He suggested that some kind of communication between some of the other municipalities may help. He also said that BID #37 is willing to work with other BID's to combat the graffiti in the City. He said that he has some pictures of graffiti that he

could give to the committee and other City departments for review.

Mr. Teig Whaley-Smith, Executive Director, Business Improvement District Board #8, Historic King Drive appeared. He said his BID contracts with the Milwaukee Christian Center for removal of graffiti. He said the Milwaukee Christian Center needs more resources.

Ken Kohen, Business Improvement District Board #41, Downer Avenue area appeared. Mr. Kohen offered his support to the City in any way he could help, such as appearances or letters.

8. Set next meeting date and agenda

Next meeting: May 21, 2009 at 10:30 A.M.

Next meeting agenda items:

- 1. Report by the Police Department regarding its plan of action for the enforcement of the graffiti ordinances.*
- 2. Report by Police Dept. relating to the enforcement of the parental responsibility ordinance.*
- 3. Report from BID Boards.*

Meeting adjourned: 12:00 P.M.

**Terry J. MacDonald
Staff Assistant**